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GIOVANNI SANZIO

AND HIS

Fresco at Cagli.



URBINO.

AMONGST the illustrious families who flourished in Italy during the fifteenth century, none were more celebrated for the protection and encouragement they extended to learning and the fine arts, than the hereditary rulers of the Duchy of Urbino. Several princes of renown in politics and arms had contributed to establish the freedom and to extend the prosperity of this little district, situated in the very bosom of the Apennines. In the middle of the century it was governed by the Count Federigo da Montefeltro, a prince of prudence, wisdom, and courage, who threw himself with energy into the struggle of Italian politics, taking service as a “condottiere,” or leader of mercenary troops, with one or other of the great parties then striving for supremacy in the Peninsula. But his name is not stained by any

of those deeds of treachery and violence which have rendered infamous that of almost every prince of the period. To a character remarkable for its faithfulness and humanity, he added an ardent love of literature, science, and the arts. He gathered around him in his little court many of the most distinguished men of his time, who spread throughout the Peninsula the fame of his capital, which they fondly called "the Italian Athens." When the Duke, as Federigo was afterwards created by Pope Sixtus IV., laid the foundations of a palace, which was to excel even the many magnificent edifices of the period in the vastness of its proportions and in the richness and beauty of its decorations, artists flocked from all parts of Italy to aid in its completion. The building was confided to Luciano Laurana, or da Laurana, one of the most renowned architects of the age; the ornaments in carved and inlaid marble and wood to Ambrogio Baroccio of Milan, Maestro Giacomo of Florence, Francesco di Giorgio Martini of Siena, and others not less celebrated; Melozzo da Forli and other eminent painters enriched the halls and library with frescoes and painted panels. Antique statues in marble and bronze were added to the works of living men, and rendered complete the choice collections of art which adorned the interior.

The palace hangs over a deep ravine, resting, like many edifices of the period, upon a bold and picturesque substruction of arches—a grand and imposing building, somewhat too massive and sombre, but highly characteristic of the dwellings of the warrior princes of the Middle Ages.* Much of the interior decoration—the sculptured chimney-pieces, the subtle carved work in marble and alabaster, and the elaborate "tarsia," or inlaid wood—still remains, and here and

* See woodcut at the head of this notice.

there painted ornaments may be traced on the walls ; but much has been disfigured or destroyed, even of late, by a Papal Legate, who has fitted up this, his official, residence, in the improved French taste, with tawdry paper-hangings and modern stoves. The collection of antique sculpture, the pictures, and the library of books and manuscripts, have long been scattered or removed.*

Although strangers had been called from various parts of Italy to adorn the new building, Urbino, like most other Italian cities, could boast of her own painters. The most celebrated was Giovanni Santi, or Sanzio, whose fame, such as it is, rests somewhat unjustly, not so much upon the intrinsic merits of his works, as upon the honour which the fatherhood of the greatest of painters has conferred upon him. He was the son of one Sante, whose father, Peruzzolo, could trace his descent from an ancestor, also named Sante, living in the beginning of the fourteenth century.† The family possessed a little land, which they cultivated for their own wants, and inhabited the castle of Colbordolo, whose deserted ruins still crown a hill top overlooking a smiling valley watered by the Isauro and the Apsa between Urbino and the Adriatic. Their dwelling was sacked, and their property destroyed, during a foray made upon the Urbinese territory, in 1446, by Sigismondo Malatesta, the Lord of Rimini. For better security, Peruzzolo moved with his family into the city, where he occupied a house which is still standing. His son Sante was already married and had

* These collections are now for the most part in the Vatican.

† From this ancestor Giovanni, according to Italian custom, took the name of "de' Santi," latinised into "Sanctius," and hence Italianised into "Sanzio." He signs himself on his pictures, "Io. de Santis," "Iohannes Santis de Urbino," and "Ioanne Sancto."

four children, the eldest of whom was Giovanni. Sante became a broker and corn-dealer, and so improved his fortunes that he was soon able to purchase two houses in Urbino and some land in the neighbourhood.

The date of Giovanni's birth is not known. He was probably a child when his father left Colbordolo, but yet old enough to feel deeply the ruin that had fallen on his home, to which in after days he touchingly alluded. He appears to have shown an early taste for the arts, and to have chosen painting as a profession. Under what master he first studied there is no record, but there must have been some school in the city in which he could learn at least the elements of the art.

Urbino could scarcely have escaped the impulse which Giotto and his followers had given to the revival of painting throughout Italy. It is even probable that the great Florentine himself had left there traces of his genius. In the neighbouring city of Gubbio, Oderigi and his scholar, Guido Palmerucci, had founded a school, which produced some fresco-painters of eminence.* One of them, Ottaviano Nelli, is known to have executed important works at Urbino in the first half of the fifteenth century. Of earlier artists who were employed in the city and the neighbourhood, the names of two only have been preserved; Giuliano, from Rimini, who painted at Urbania, in 1307, a large wooden crucifix, such as were carried in processions—a rude work in the style of Margheritone of Arezzo; and another Giuliano, who painted in Urbino some sixty years later.†

* See my memoir of Ottaviano Nelli. Publications of the Arundel Society for 1857.

† Passavant, *Raphael von Urbino*, vol. i. p. 425.

The earliest paintings of any importance now existing in Urbino, are the frescoes of the oratory of St. John the Baptist, executed in 1416, by the brothers Lorenzo and Jacopo from San Severino. The Crucifixion, a large composition crowded with figures, occupies the end of the chapel. The side walls are covered with subjects taken chiefly from the history of the Baptist. These frescoes are interesting both on account of their actual merit, and for the place they hold in the Umbrian school of painting. They bear evident traces of the influence of the "Giotteschi," or followers of Giotto, but the colouring is warmer, the drawing less mannered, and the sentiment more devotional than in their works. In composition, too, they show originality of treatment, and considerable dramatic power. Many of the heads, especially in the Crucifixion, are very dignified, and have at the same time a natural and portrait-like character. The drawing of the nude is as faulty, as might be expected in a work of the period.*

It was probably upon these frescoes that Giovanni Santi first studied. His earliest style may also have been affected by the works which the graceful pencil of Gentile da Fabriano had left in the Hermitage of Val di Sasso, and the altar-piece which Fra Angelico had stopped to paint at Forano. But a still more direct influence may, perhaps, be traced to Ottaviano Nelli, of whom Rosini, in his "History of Italian Painting," assumes that he may actually have been the pupil.† A comparison of dates will, however, show that Ottaviano was, in all probability, dead

* Of the two brothers, Lorenzo the eldest appears to have been the most skilful artist. An altar-piece by him in the National Gallery is a good example of his style.

† See my memoir of Ottaviano Nelli, p. 12.

before Giovanni came, as a boy, to Urbino.* He was still young when, in 1469, Pietro della Francesca became his guest. This eminent painter, one of the most learned and original of his time, had been called to Urbino by the munificence of Federigo; whose portrait, with that of Battista Sforza, his wife, he was invited to paint.† Giovanni profited by his teaching, especially in perspective, of which Pietro had been one of the first to determine and explain the true principles.‡ Other painters of scarcely less merit had been drawn from various parts of Italy to the enlightened court of the Count of Montefeltro. Amongst them the most distinguished were Bartolomeo Coradini, more generally called, from his profession of a Dominican monk, Fra Carnevale, whose works have, for the most part, perished, but who, judging from such as remain, was a painter of singular ability; § Melozzo, from Forli, scarcely better known than Fra Carnevale, but the few fragments of whose frescoes are to be classed amongst the most remarkable productions of the age in which he lived; || and the Florentine, Paolo Ucello, who

* Peruzzolo, Giovanni's grandfather, sold his house at Colbordolo in 1454. He may have previously settled his family in Urbino, as the foray of Sigismondo Malatesta, in which he suffered, probably took place eight years before. No notice of Ottaviano Nelli exists after 1444, and his careful biographer, Sig. Bonfatti, conjectures that he died about this time. He painted at Urbino between 1428 and 1433. No traces of his works are now to be found there. (Pungileoni, *Elogio Storico di Giovanni Santi*.)

† These portraits are now in the gallery of the Uffizi at Florence. A memorandum of the payment of ten "Bolognini" to Santi for the entertainment of Pietro della Francesca is still preserved.

‡ Santi, in his poem, terms perspective a new art, "invention del nostro secul nova."

§ His altar-piece in the Brera may be particularly mentioned.

|| Of *authentic* works by this very original and remarkable painter, I am only acquainted with the following:—A fresco painted in 1475, representing Sixtus IV. appointing Platina Librarian of the Vatican, with portraits besides of the Cardinal Pietro Riario, Giuliano della Rovere (afterwards Pope Julius II.), and of their brothers Girolamo Riario and Giovanni della Rovere, a work of great vigour and character, formerly in the "Floreria" of the Vatican, but now transferred to canvas and in the Picture Gallery; the fragments of a fresco painted in the tribune of the church of the Santi Apostoli at

had advanced his art a step by novel effects of foreshortening. Lastly, Luca Signorelli, whose daring attempts in the same direction, and whose rich imagination, were preparing the way for Michelangelo, was painting in Urbino in 1484. Giovanni was well acquainted with the works of these masters, and had carefully studied them.

Even the school of painting which had arisen in Flanders, and used oil as a vehicle, thus introducing a new era in the art, was not unrepresented at Urbino. Count Federigo, not satisfied with obtaining a picture by the greatest of its masters, John van Eyck, had invited to his Court one of that painter's scholars, Justus of Ghent. An altar-piece by this artist, dated in 1474, still exists in the church of S. Agata. It is of very inferior merit when compared with the masterpieces of his great contemporaries, and is chiefly interesting as being probably one of the first pictures painted in Italy on the new method, and as containing portraits of Federigo and of Caterino Zeno, a Venetian sent as ambassador from the Persian King, Ussun Khan.*

Rome, in 1472, and destroyed in 1711,—one part consisting of Christ ascending to heaven surrounded by angels, is now on the great staircase of the Quirinal, and fourteen heads of apostles and angels are in the Sacristy of St. Peter's, the latter singularly beautiful, and executed with a freedom and breadth of style much in advance of his time; and a fresco in a very dilapidated state, lately removed from above the shop-door of an apothecary at Forli, and known as the "Pestapepe." To these may be added some heads remarkable for their vigorous character and truth, which probably once adorned the library of Federigo's palace at Urbino. Copies of some of them were made by Raphael in his sketch-book, now preserved at Venice. They were formerly in the Campana collection at Rome. The works of his pupil, Marco Palmezzano, a painter far inferior in merit, have frequently been attributed to him, owing to the signature "Marcus de Melotius," *i. e.*, Marcus the pupil of Melozzo, sometimes appended to them; as by the editors of the Le Monnier edition of Vasari's Lives.—*Commentario alla vita di Benozzo Gozzoli*, vol. 4.

* Passavant, however, thinks very highly of this work by Justus of Ghent, especially

But Giovanni's style seems to have undergone the greatest change after he became acquainted with the works of Andrea Mantegna. He appears to have accompanied Federigo to Mantua in 1482, and to have there acquired the friendship of that most original and thoughtful of painters.

Giovanni, like many of the great artists of his day, united with the practice of his art an ardent love for polite literature. This taste was fostered by his intercourse with the eminent men of letters who frequented the Court of Urbino. He sought to repay the benefits he had received from his generous patron by recording in verse, and dedicating to his son and successor Guidubaldo I., the principal events of Federigo's life. The ease with which Giovanni's beautiful native tongue lends itself to rhythm and rhyme, enabled him to compose, in what he terms "the little-used metre of terza-rima," a poem of no less than 23 cantos and 24,000 lines.* The verse is commonplace; and this rhymed chronicle, like most other compositions of the period, is rendered tedious by details of unimportant events related with precise minuteness. Still it contains passages which show that the author was not without true poetic feeling, and that he possessed a highly cultivated mind, well stored with the learning of his day. The sentiments are always praiseworthy, sometimes lofty and noble; and he displays an ardent love of his country, and a deep sense of the calamities hanging over her

extolling the composition and the vigorous treatment of the heads (Rafael von Urbino, vol. i. p. 430). It appeared to me quite undeserving of the praise he bestows upon it.

* The MS. of this poem is preserved in the Vatican. Extracts of it are given by Passavant in his *Life of Raphael*, and by Dennistoun in his "*Dukes of Urbino*." It is entitled "*Principio del' Opera composta da Giohanni de Sante pictore: nela quale se contiene la vita e gesti de lo Ill^o et invictissimo principe Federico feretrano, duca de Urbino.*"

from the internal dissensions which were then tearing her asunder. Although his poem is valuable for its illustrations of contemporary history, it is chiefly noticeable here on account of the record it contains of the principal artists living at the period in different parts of Italy; proving that the author was well acquainted with their works, and had studied the principal characteristics of their styles, which he generally describes by an appropriate epithet. There are no names of eminence which he does not mention, except those of the two masters of the Bolognese school, Francia and Lorenzo Costa (an omission not to be accounted for), and Pinturicchio, with whose works nevertheless he must have been familiar. He calls John van Eyck "the great," and alludes to his pupil Roger Vander Weyden; but in no way notices Justus of Ghent, who, as we have seen, was actually painting at Urbino. Giovanni appears, therefore, to have appreciated at their just value the works of this artist.* The painter who receives the amplest tribute of his praise is Andrea Mantegna. Him he calls "the most excellent and worthy in the art of painting of all those who flourished in that illustrious age;" and describes as uniting those various great qualities and beauties which others only possessed singly, and which Giovanni enumerates as, in his opinion, required to form the truly great painter; namely, grandeur of design, which he declares to be "the true foundation of painting," invention, industry, colour (especially in the art of graduating tints, so as to produce the effects of foreshortening), and the knowledge of the laws of perspective, requiring an acquaintance with arithmetic, geometry, and architecture. He places first amongst those pursuits which confer glory upon man,

* Passavant (vol. i. p. 431) seems, however, to be of opinion that Justus did exercise some influence over Giovanni, and upon Italian art in general.

Poetry and History, and then Sculpture and Painting, and offers some just and well-considered remarks upon the end and functions of the latter art.

In his "bottega," or shop, in which he also carried on the trade of a gilder,* Giovanni appears to have begun by painting devotional pictures for country churches, and for pious customers who had made vows to the Virgin or a patron saint. Occasionally, he was employed in painting frescoes of Holy Families, or some other sacred subject, in the little chapels, and roadside oratories, which nestle in the blue hills and wooded valleys around Urbino. Some of these early works may still be found by the curious traveller, but they have for the most part perished, yielding to the hand of Time, or brought to ruin during the many wars which have swept over this part of Italy. His fame gradually extended beyond his native province, and he was invited to paint altar-pieces in the cities of the Marches—at Fano, Pesaro, Gradara, and Sinigaglia. Several of these pictures are still preserved. His reputation was at the highest, and his talents most matured, for he must have reached his fiftieth year, when he was engaged, in 1490 or 1491,† by Pietro Tiranni, of patrician descent, to decorate a family chapel in the Church of S. Domenico at Cagli, a town of some size near Urbino. He went thither accompanied by his wife and by his son, Raphael, then a boy of nine years old.

* He pursued this calling to the latest period of his life. A year before his death he was paid a small sum for gilding certain candelabra and angels (Pungileoni, p. 44). In 1489 we find him employed with other artists in devising triumphal arches, and other fancy decorations, to grace the marriage of Guidubaldo I. and Elizabetta Gonzaga.

† Or a year later, if Pungileoni's statement be true that he was accompanied by Raphael's stepmother (p. 37). Magia Ciarla died in 1491, and Giovanni's second marriage took place in the following year.

The principal fresco which he painted there, is the most important, and probably the best preserved, of all his works. It occupies the end of an arched recess behind an altar. On the vaulted roof above, on an azure ground sown with golden stars, is the Almighty, surrounded by boy angels of exquisite grace, who are worshipping and playing on instruments of music. In front of the arch is the Annunciation—a half-figure of the Virgin occupying a medallion on one side, the Angel a similar medallion on the other. The principal fresco is divided horizontally into two distinct parts. In the lower division are eight figures of life size. The Virgin, seated on a richly decorated throne, tenderly supports the Infant Christ, who, standing on her knee, grasps with one hand the scarf thrown across her shoulders. On each side of her is a boy angel; one stands with his arms folded on his breast, the other, with his hands united, bends in adoration. To her right are St. Peter holding the keys and St. Francis of Assisi, represented, as he sometimes is by the Umbrian painters, without a beard, and without the emaciated form which generally characterises him. To her left are St. John the Baptist pointing to the Saviour and St. Dominic reading in an open book.* In front of the Virgin, upon the pavement, are a candle and two small bottles, such as are used to hold oil or the consecrated elements at the mass. The entire group is enclosed in an architectural recess, the top of which, not unskilfully drawn in perspective, is made to coincide with the spring of the arch, and to divide the fresco into two distinct compartments. In the upper, in a semicircle or lunette, Santi has painted the Resurrection of our Lord. The figures are smaller than those in the lower division. The Saviour, with the white grave-clothes partly thrown from his shoulders, and surrounded by a

* According to Pungileoni, St. Thomas Aquinas, but this is an error.

glory of gilded rays, issues from the tomb—a chamber excavated in the rock, and entered by a square doorway, like the ancient places of sepulture still seen in Palestine. He holds in one hand the red crossed banner of salvation, and raises the other in the act of blessing. Around him are scattered six sleeping guards, dressed in the costume and armour of the soldiers of the Montefeltro. They are represented in various attitudes; the legs of two are hanging over the rock above the architectural division of the fresco. The background is formed by a landscape with wooded hills, and the towers of a distant town.

This fresco is not only the most important work that Giovanni Santi ever executed, but it displays more than any other his peculiar style, and enables us to trace the process by which that style was formed. It is also peculiarly interesting as showing the influence which he exercised over his son Raphael. It may be gathered, from what I have said of Santi, that he was a laborious and loving follower of his art, indebted for any success he attained in it rather to painstaking and conscientious study, and to a correct taste, than to the fire of genius, and that lofty imagination, which mark the truly great and original painter. His works fully bear out this view of his character as an artist. The tendency of his mind was essentially "eclectic"—to use a term subsequently applied to the masters of a celebrated school. His earliest productions, and especially his Holy Families, appear to have been imitated, except as regards colour (and the exception is a curious one, and difficult to be accounted for), from the Umbrian type, such as he had studied it when a boy in the frescoes of the San Severini, Ottaviano Nelli, and Gentile de Fabriano, and later in the pictures of his contemporaries, Benedetto

Bonfigli, and Pietro Perugino. He gradually changed and improved his style as he enlarged his acquaintance with the works of the great masters of other schools which flourished in his day in Italy, and perhaps also by the continued study of the specimens of antique sculpture collected together in the Ducal Palace at Urbino. This progress was constantly going on, and the successive modifications in his style may be very clearly seen in his pictures. In a fresco of the Virgin and Child, originally painted on the wall of his house in Urbino,* and long believed to be a youthful work by his son, with the graceful composition of the Umbrian school he has combined, in the head of the Madonna, the peculiar manner of Pietro della Francesca, or Fra Carnevale. The architecture in an "Annunciation," now in the Brera Gallery, shows that he put into practice the rules of perspective which he had learnt from the former master. Whilst one female figure in an altar-piece at Fano, representing the Visitation, reminds one of Pietro Perugino in expression and in grace, others, in the free treatment of drapery, and in the noble and dignified character of the heads, show an imitation of Botticelli or Cosimo Roselli. In a later picture, in the Church of S. Croce at the same place, a S. Sebastian and two Angels are altogether Umbrian in character and feeling, whilst the broad and well studied folds of the draperies point to the influence of Verocchio and the sculpturesque school of painting. In the "Martyrdom of S. Sebastian," in an oratory dedicated to the Saint in Urbino, he appears first to have attempted, in certain figures of archers and in an angel, some of those effects of foreshortening which he had been taught by Mantegna

* This fresco, detached from a wall on the ground floor, has been removed into one of the upper rooms of the house. It has been so frequently restored and repainted that little but the composition and the general forms remain.

or Melozzo. In a votive picture painted in 1488, in the Convent of Montefiorentino, near Urbania, for the Count Carlo Olivo Planiani or Pianani, who is represented in full armour, Santi has successfully united the broad manner of the Florentine school with the rich and carefully executed details of such Umbrian masters as Gentile da Fabriano and Pietro Perugino. A peacock's feather, the badge of the Ghibelline party to which the Count belonged, and the reflections and play of light upon the armour, deserve especial notice as examples of highly successful naturalistic painting. A picture in the Church of the Franciscans at Urbino, painted in 1489, evidently shows the influence of Mantegna, with whose works he had now probably become well acquainted through his visit to Mantua, especially in the life-like and dignified character of the heads, and the treatment of the draperies, whilst some lovely angels breathe the true Umbrian spirit.

The fresco at Cagli, being one of the latest of his works, represents his most matured style, founded upon all that he had gathered from the study of the various schools of Italy. It is unquestionably a very remarkable work, whether on account of its actual merits, or considered with reference to the period in which it was executed, entitling Santi to a far higher place amongst the painters of his day than has been assigned to him. In his earlier pictures his principal faults consist of a dark heavy outline, a cold leaden colouring, especially in the shadows, an absence of those delicate and subtle middle-tints and half-tints which give truth and harmony to painting, and the feebly drawn attenuated extremities of his figures. These defects pervade more or less all the works by him I have described. Although he imitated the Florentine masters in

some things, he does not appear to have adopted their grand and natural composition. All his pictures are devotional, and all are treated, in the arrangement of the groups, more or less according to the conventional mode of the previous century. His merits consist in the truthful and animated imitation of nature in single parts and in details,—his portraits, especially, being very life-like and highly individualised,—in the lofty and noble expression of his heads, in the breadth and dignity of his draperies, and in the grace and deeply spiritual feeling which characterises his representations of women and children, more especially of the latter, who are often of exquisite loveliness and simplicity. The Cagli fresco, whilst not without some of the blemishes I have pointed out in his style, unites more of these high qualities than any other of his works.*

The general arrangement and subject of the fresco are purely conventional. Although apparently very dissimilar in its two parts, the whole is meant to carry out one simple and connected idea. The composition of the lower portion, the Madonna between four saints, two on each side of her, is derived from the early *ancona*, or altar-piece, in which the Virgin and Child occupied a centre panel, and various holy personages separate compartments on either side of her. This artificial grouping was occasionally adopted to a late period

* Kugler ("Handbook of Painting," Italian School, vol. i. p. 263) remarks, "Giovanni is seen in his highest beauty in this fresco . . . His drawing is not only fuller and more animated, and the colouring fresher than in his other works, but in the expression of many of his figures he approaches the grace of his son Raphael." Passavant, in his *Life of Raphael* (vol. i. p. 37), also places it first among Santi's works. See likewise Pungileoni, "Elogio Storico," p. 37; and Dennistoun's "Dukes of Urbino," vol. ii. p. 208. Rosini in his "History of Italian Painting" (vol. iii. p. 171) erroneously describes the subject of this fresco as an "Epifania," and calls the angel to the right St. John the Baptist.

by many even of the great masters of the Florentine school, and was not altogether abandoned by Raphael himself. It was followed by Santi in seven out of the nine important works by him still preserved. In the Cagli fresco the Virgin and Infant Christ are attended by the Baptist as the Precursor, St. Peter as the head of the Catholic Church, and St. Francis and St. Dominic as the founders of the two great religious orders which were mainly instrumental in establishing its authority. According to a tradition the angel, with his arms crossed, to the right of the throne, is the portrait of Giovanni's son, Raphael, who accompanied him to Cagli. The age would well agree with that of the boy, then nine years old, and in that gentle and beautiful face may perhaps be traced the features which his fond master Pietro, and he himself in manhood, not unfrequently portrayed.*

This group of the Virgin and Child, with the two youthful angels, is very graceful and pleasing. It is conceived in the devotional spirit of the Umbrian school, but has less of its affectation and mannerism. The action is very natural, the drawing animated and on the whole correct, the nude being fuller and less hard in outline than in the painter's easel pictures. The figures of the four saints are grand and dignified, the heads noble, and distinguished by natural and appro-

* A tracing of this interesting portrait is published by the Arundel Society. Other figures in Santi's pictures have been pointed out as the portraits of Raphael when a boy. An angel in the altar-piece of the church of the Franciscans at Urbino was long believed to represent him, but it has been shown to be that of a child of the Buffi family. An angel in the Montefiorentino altar-piece was also supposed to be the young Raphael, but as he could not have been nine years old when that picture was painted, he could scarcely have sat for a youth of twelve or thirteen. Passavant has suggested that the Madonna and Child preserved in Santi's house at Urbino are portraits of Magia Ciarla and her infant son; but this is a mere conjecture.

priate expression; the draperies are broadly treated and the extremities, the hands and feet, are less attenuated and meagre, except, perhaps, in the figure of the Baptist, than in other works of the painter. Whilst the influence of Mantegna can be detected in these figures, that of the Florentine school is perhaps still more evident, especially in the very fine representation of St. Peter, which reminds one of Fra Bartolomeo. The conventional division of the picture into two distinct parts produces an awkward effect, especially as the figure of Christ in the upper compartment is of smaller proportions than the figures in the lower. The artist evidently intended, by this difference of size, to show that the upper part represented a vision, or the revelation of a future event foreshadowed at the birth of the Saviour. The figure of Christ is fairly drawn, but a little weak. The expression is marked by solemn majesty. The sleeping guards, tossed in various attitudes, are skilfully foreshortened after the manner of Mantegna, which Giovanni in this instance evidently imitated. The landscape is altogether conventional, too green and monotonous in colour, and very inferior in sentiment and true feeling for nature to the backgrounds of Pietro Perugino.

Except in the upper division, where it is somewhat raw, the colouring is in good keeping, more harmonious and lively, more transparent and less heavy in the shadows than is usual with the painter. That of the masses of drapery is light and simple, according to the habit of the painters of the fifteenth century. The carnations and luminous high white lights in the flesh tints, especially in the heads of the Virgin and Child, have a rich and pleasing effect. Still the general tone of colour is deficient in that brilliant glow, so characteristic of the best painters of the Umbrian school, nor

has it the sober truthfulness which distinguishes the great Florentine masters of the period. It is peculiarly Giovanni's own, and gives that distinguishing character or style to his works by which they may be at once detected. He has profusely touched some of the draperies with gold, and has surrounded the figure of Christ in the lunette, and the head of the Child in the lower part, with gilded rays, a common practice of the painters of the period to give additional brilliancy to their pictures.

The technical qualities of the fresco show that Santi had great command over the material, and it is to be regretted that more of his works in it have not been preserved. With the exception of a "Pieta," or dead Christ, with St. Jerome and St. Bonaventura, over the tomb of the wife of Pietro Tiranni, adjoining the chapel of the family, and the Virgin and Child in the house at Urbino, I know of no other fresco by him. A short time ago one discovered under whitewash, in the same church of the Dominicans at Cagli, and attributed to him, was destroyed by the monks. I saw a head cut from it, which had all the characteristics of Santi's style.

It was during his sojourn at Cagli, or shortly after his return to Urbino, that Santi lost his wife, Magia Ciarla, the mother of Raphael. He married a year after, Bernardina the daughter of Piero di Parte, a goldsmith. On the 1st of August 1494, about three years after he had painted his great fresco, he died and was buried in the church of the Franciscans at Urbino. A life of careful industry had enabled him to save property to the value of 860 florins, which he divided by his will between his wife, his only son,* and his

* Giovanni had a daughter by his second wife, but she died an infant.

sister's husband Bartolomeo, leaving to the Brotherhood of the Sta. Maria della Misericordia in Urbino such property as might remain undisposed of, in the event of the failure of his descendants. That event was not long in occurring; for on the death of his illustrious son in 1520, the Brotherhood claimed their right, and received, after various deductions for legacies, 355 florins.*

Santi left his son to the care of Magia Ciarla's brother, Simone. His uncle and guardian, and not his father as erroneously stated by Vasari, placed Raphael to complete his education as a painter with one of the most distinguished masters of the time, Pietro Perugino. The youth was then about twelve years old, and had already shown proofs of the genius which afterwards raised him to the summit of his art. That genius had been lovingly developed by his father, whose constant companion he had been. Brought up in the society of those men eminent in literature and art who frequented the Court of Urbino, surrounded by the monuments of modern painting and ancient sculpture which adorned Federigo's palace, and under the guidance of one well able to direct his taste and cultivate his understanding, Raphael's training as an artist had already far advanced when his father died. That Santi's early teaching and example exercised a permanent influence upon his son, to be traced

* To his wife Bernardina, Santi left various rich articles of apparel, which are curiously specified in the barbarous law Latin of the period in his will. She also had the use of his house in Urbino. Passavant, "*Rafael von Urbino*," vol. i. p. 407. The principal authorities for the life of Giovanni Santi are, Pungileoni, who, in his "*Elogio Storico*," first collected with curious diligence all that could be found relative to the painter in the archives and traditions of his native country; and Passavant, who has added some interesting documents to this collection, and has illustrated Santi's works by his able criticisms. See also a notice of the painter in Dennistoun's "*Dukes of Urbino*," vol. ii.; and in the Commentary to the Life of Raphael in Le Monnier's edition of Vasari's *Lives*, published at Florence.

even at the period of the highest development of his powers, can scarcely be doubted when the works of the two are compared. In the Cagli fresco, for instance, Passavant has pointed out the resemblance between the Virgin and Child and the group in a picture painted by Raphael in his youth, and now in the possession of the Alfani family at Perugia, and the Baptist seems to have suggested the figure of the same saint in the well-known 'Madonna di Fuligno.' Raphael closely copied the Christ in the same fresco in a cartoon for tapestry now in the Vatican. An archer in the Martyrdom of S. Sebastian at Urbino is recognised in the young man breaking the rod in the beautiful picture of the Sposalizio now in the Brera. Many other analogies could be pointed out. A 'Tobit and the Angel' in the Church of St. Francis in the same city, was long believed to be by Raphael, and the peculiarly "Raphaelesque" character of a Saint Sebastian and some angels in the picture at Fano leads Passavant to remark, "that these figures have a charm which gives a foreshadowing of Raphael," whilst he observes in reference to Santi's representation of the heads of children "that both in type and expression they have a striking resemblance to those of his son." The influence of his father is very visible in the earliest of his works, painted when he was still Pietro's scholar, and was imitating his manner. For he soon exceeded his new master in the dignified and unconventional character of his heads, in the broad treatment of his draperies, and in the exceeding loveliness and natural grace of his angels and children—precisely the characteristics of his father's style. Passavant has remarked that in his clear white lights and reddish transitions, especially in the flesh tints, Raphael imitated the principles of colouring adopted by Santi, and especially observable in his representations of children and young persons. But it was

undoubtedly from Pietro's teaching that he acquired that richness and brilliancy yet perfect harmony of colour, which give such exquisite beauty to his earliest pictures, and to which Santi never attained.

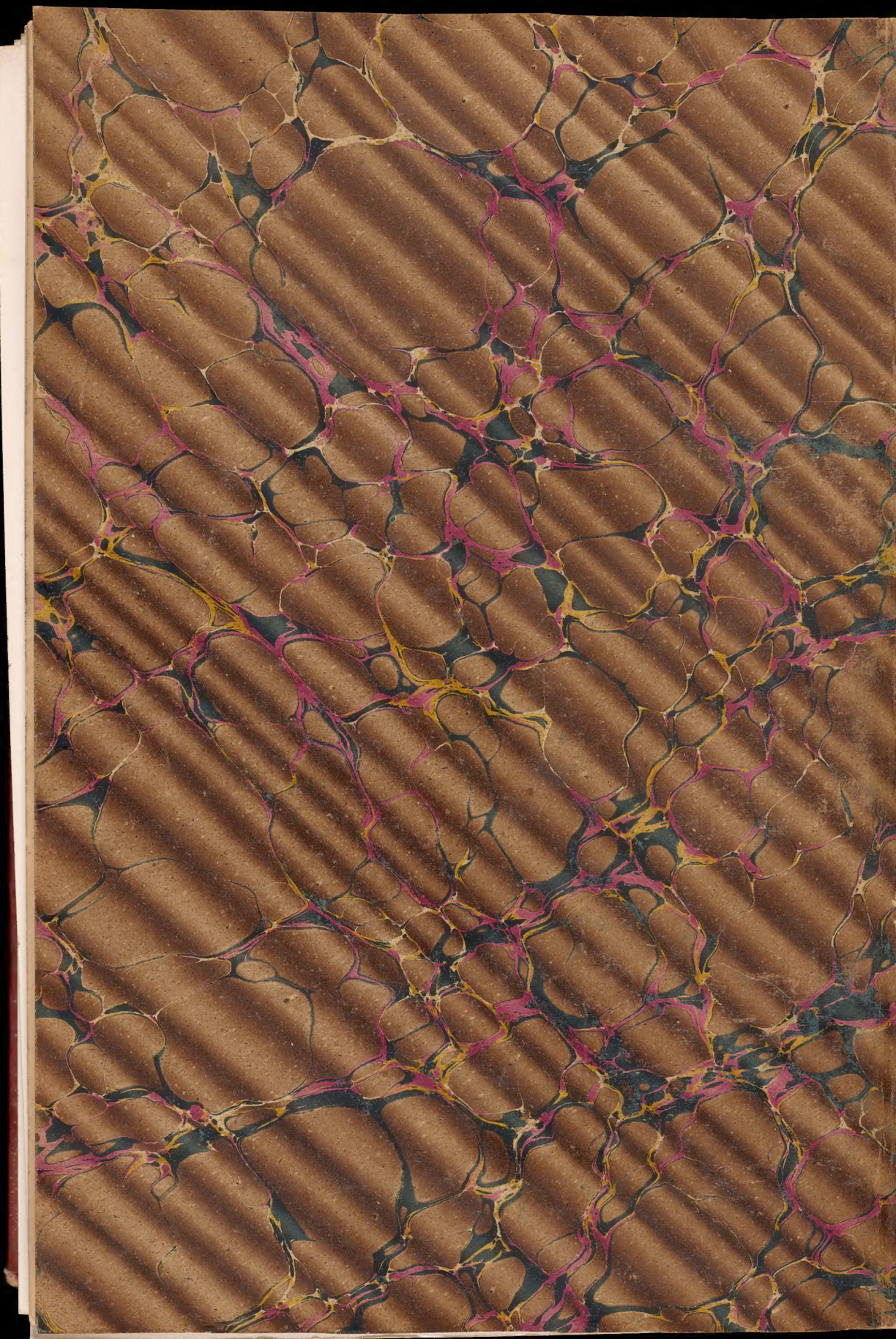
Vasari declares that Raphael helped his father in many of his works. This may have been the case, but he was too young to have rendered him any material assistance, and it is idle now to seek in Santi's productions traces of the hand of his son.

Whilst Santi, by his knowledge, experience, and taste, had exercised upon Raphael the influence I have attempted to describe, he was deficient in that vigour and originality which lead to the foundation of a school or to the real progress of art. Praiseworthy diligence may end in excellent mediocrity. The conscientious imitation of nature in details and in parts may produce very valuable and interesting pictures. But it required the genius of a Mantegna, a Verocchio, or a Luca Signorelli to mould their generation, and to prepare the way for those who have carried their art to the highest perfection it has attained. The works of such painters may have a thousand faults, may even be repulsive to those who cannot appreciate their merits, or feel the inspiration that produced them. But they mark an epoch in painting, and furnish the ideas and materials which others under more favourable circumstances, and enjoying the advantages those very works confer, have been able to develop. Thus it was that the visit of Raphael to Florence and his contemplation of the masterpieces of its school, fired the genius which gave birth to the Frescoes of the Vatican, the Cartoons and the Madonna di S. Sisto.

Although, therefore, Santi founded no school and left no professed followers, yet his conscientious study of nature, his feeling for beauty, and his endeavour to select and combine that which was most truthful and dignified in the styles of his contemporaries, entitle him to a high rank amongst the painters of his day. That he was the father of Raphael and his earliest teacher gives him an additional claim to the respect of posterity. In their desire to preserve the works of such men—works likely to perish and men less known than from their intrinsic merits they deserve—the Council of the Arundel Society have selected for publication Santi's fresco at Cagli.*

A. H. LAYARD.

* I cannot forbear noticing the admirable manner in which this fresco has been executed in chromo-lithography from Signor Mariannecci's excellent copy, by Messrs. Storch and Kramer of Berlin, under the able superintendence and direction of Mr. L. Gruner. It is the best specimen with which I am acquainted of a process that is being gradually brought to high perfection under these skilful chromo-lithographers.





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